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COMMISSIONER

IMPORTANT KEY INFORMATION:

► To access the DFCS
Quarterly Child Death
Analysis, visit:
<http://dhs.georgia.gov/protecting-georgias-most-precious-asset>

DFCS LEADERSHIP:

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CHILD FATALITIES IN GEORGIA

The Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) continues to implement measures to protect Georgia's most precious asset – children. To further support its efforts, DFCS began publishing child death data on a quarterly basis to ignite conversations and spur communities to action across Georgia. The quarterly data provides insight into the circumstances surrounding a child's death for children whose families have been provided support services within the last five years and whose deaths have been reported to the agency.

HOW ARE CHILD DEATHS REPORTED IN GEORGIA?

The Georgia Department of Public Health's Office of Vital Records tracks all births and deaths that occur throughout the state. The Child Fatality Review Board identifies and uniformly reports the cause and manner of child deaths.

Only child death reports related to suspected abuse/neglect are required to be reported to DFCS. As a result, DFCS is not provided the information on all child fatalities in the state to determine if a child or child's family had history with DFCS prior to the death of the child.

DFCS is now receiving more reports of child deaths that are unrelated to abuse/maltreatment. For that reason, the number of deaths that DFCS is reviewing has increased. In 2012, DFCS began systematically reviewing, maintaining and publishing this data in the Quarterly Child Death Analysis which was established to create consistency and transparency.

DOES DFCS KNOW WHETHER THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN CHILD DEATHS FOR THOSE CHILDREN OR FAMILIES THAT HAVE HAD HISTORY WITH THE AGENCY?

DFCS historically maintained and reported all child deaths related to abuse/neglect on an annual basis through the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS). This information includes children and families that may or may not have history with DFCS.

The following information for child deaths in Georgia related to child abuse and neglect was reported by NCANDS for FFY 2010 and 2011:

- For Federal Fiscal Year 2010 there were 77 child deaths in Georgia related to neglect or abuse. (October 2009 to September 2010)
- For Federal Fiscal Year 2011 there were 65 child deaths in Georgia related to neglect or abuse. (October 2010 to September 2011)

DOES DFCS GET ITS NUMBERS FROM THE CHILD FATALITY REVIEW BOARD?

No. Our numbers are based solely on the child death reports we receive from reporters in the community. Reporters are required to make DFCS aware of any child death related to suspected abuse/neglect. Reporters may also make DFCS aware of child deaths that are unrelated to suspected abuse/neglect. Reporters include but are not limited to, hospitals, law enforcement, coroners, county child fatality review boards.

To learn more about how to prevent child fatalities and to access the DFCS Quarterly Child Death Analysis, visit <http://dhs.georgia.gov/protecting-georgias-most-precious-asset>.